

Faith and Inspiration

Desperate Times

There is an expression that stipulates "desperate times call for desperate measures." In a great many instances, anger and frustration may seem to be legitimate reactions to breaches of trust, abuses of power, or failures of leadership. Such intense emotions can lead to destructive and counter-productive expressions of dissatisfaction and desperation.

It is inevitable that one will encounter all sorts of interesting rationalizations for such manifestations of discontent. Some will attribute it to social or economic disparities. Some will assume political or cultural tensions and prejudices.

And some will claim that there exists an underlying and systemic oppression or persecution by one group against another. Indeed, any or all of these could represent contributing factors in the complex interplay of any diverse and divergent collections of individuals.

Amidst all such arguments and speculations, it should be recognized that any effort to understand these kinds of exhibitions of hopelessness or defiance should not devolve into an attempt to excuse or defend troublesome and harmful conduct.

There are some, including believers, who might feel compelled to take the notion of forgiveness beyond its intention, failing to discern that in the same passage that Jesus affirms "neither do I condemn you," he also exhorts to "go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

It does not seem plausible to construe that the Bible advocates that desperation merits entitlement. For instance, while Jesus and the apostles clearly expressed a heart for the poor and needy (Matthew 19:21, Luke 12:33-34, Luke 14:12-14, Galatians 2:10, James 2:5), they never once advanced any assertion that would have supported what some might promote as forcible income or wealth "redistribution." Jesus certainly would not have ever encouraged individuals to take it upon themselves to appropriate the material resources of others.

The Bible obviously encourages generosity, but one would be hard pressed to deduce that it sanctions "compulsory generosity." Rather,

as Scripture describes, God "loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). While there are many who prefer to frame the struggles of the world as a matter of conflict between "haves" and "have-nots" — that is, between those with sufficient or even abundant resources and those without — and would then contend that some form of economic "equity" is the solution, the truth is that God challenges and commends all to demonstrate generosity and compassion.

If we are led to conclude that adverse circumstances justify adverse actions, then we undermine the kind of love described in Scripture (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). God desires that we express and demonstrate his love toward one another, not motivated by threat or guilt, but rather of our own volition and aspiration to reflect

his image.

In an episode of the television series "Star Trek: Voyager," a race of aliens who are suffering from a devastating disease have developed the technological means to extract organs from other species and adapt them to their own physiology in order to help stave off the effects of this plague. One of the starship Voyager's crew members becomes an unfortunate victim of this organ piracy, losing his set of lungs to the aliens' injurious handiwork.

The ship's Emergency Medical Hologram is able to devise a set of artificial lungs for the crew member, but his prognosis is confinement to the sick bay in a prone and virtually paralyzed position indefinitely.

Captain Kathryn Janeway orders pursuit of the aliens in an effort to recover the illicitly harvested organs. Upon confronting them, Janeway discovers the details of their plight. While sympathetic to their regrettable circumstances, she insists that they must return what they had forcibly procured without consent.

JANEWAY: I have a great sympathy for what your race has endured, but I cannot allow you to keep the organs you removed from one of our crew members. We need them back immediately. DEREETH: I'm afraid that isn't possible. I have already bio-chemically altered the air-breathing

organs and grafted them into Motura's body. They are a part of him now.

... JANEWAY: So now I am left with the same choice you made. Whether to commit murder to save a life, or to allow my own crewman to die while you breath air through his lungs. MOTURA: It must be impossible for you to understand how any civilised people could come to this. Before the phage began, we were known as educators and explorers, a people whose greatest achievements were artistic. I myself am a sculptor of note on my world. All I can say is that when your entire existence is at stake —

... JANEWAY: I can't begin to understand what your people have gone through. They may have found a way to ignore the moral implications of what you are doing, but I have no such luxury. I don't have the freedom to kill you to save another. My culture finds that to be a reprehensible and entirely unacceptable act.

While the aliens feel they have no other choice but to act out of desperation, Janeway concludes she must exercise restraint, while also assuring them that any further invasive acts against her and her crew will not be tolerated. In an effort to make amends, the aliens offer to try to heal the afflicted crew member. Due to their advanced knowledge and technology in the field of genetics, immunology, and bio-engineering, they are able to adapt a lung transplant procedure to restore his ability to breathe on his own. Janeway remains adamant that they should not cross paths again.

Ideally, entitlement should never be assumed, and compassion should never enable exploitation. Throughout the text, the Scriptures counsel and encourage us to solicit and invest in God's provision, peace, and preservation of our soul during all moments in life, including the challenges and adversities (Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 50:15, Isaiah 43:2, John 14:27, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 1 Peter 5:7).

Rather than lashing out, we are called to lean in; rather than recklessness or presumptuousness, we are urged toward contemplation and consideration. For believers, desperate times call for desperate faith and even further reliance and trust in God.



Vincent V. Marshburn
Homestead Mennonite Church



MARTHA MARY MAAS, born March 11, 1962, returned home to the Lord on April 14, 2023, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Martha was born and raised in Homestead where she lived her entire life.

Martha was employed for over 40 years by Homestead Hospital in the Cardiopulmonary Department. Martha loved her job and her work family at Baptist Homestead Hospital. She was so grateful for all the compassionate healthcare providers who took such wonderful care of her while at MCI, Baptist Health and Homestead Hospital.

Martha was predeceased by her parents, Fred and Kathleen Maas, and her sister, Carol Montgomery. She is survived by her daughter Lindy Mayer (Jeffrey) and her son, Justin Herr, as well as her siblings, Frederick Maas (Tracey), Edward Maas (Laurie), Kathy Cuthbert (David), John Maas (Michele), and Rose Williams (John).

A funeral service will take place at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Homestead, Florida, on Saturday, April 22nd, 2023 at 1 PM. Martha was a lifetime member of Sacred Heart.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Homestead Hospital Foundation

Marlyn Eaker Carpenter

MARLYN EAKER CARPENTER, born June 30, 1942, returned home to the Lord on April 15, 2023, at the age of 80, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Marlyn was born in Cherryville, NC and moved to Homestead, FL in 1945 at the age of three.

Preceded in death by her husband Dennis Carpenter, her parents Kern and Rubie Lee Eaker, and her sister, Verneda Bailey.

She is survived by her partner, Frederick Kalmey, brother Charles Eaker (Linda) of Boomer, NC, brother Dan Eaker (Lu Ann) of Richmond Hill, GA, her two children, Kern Carpenter (Cheryl), Denise Berry (Dennis) and four grandchildren, Wesley & Macie Berry, and Dennis and Austin Carpenter.

Marlyn graduated from South Dade High School in 1960 and furthered her education for one year at Andrew's College in Georgia. During her years at South Dade High, Marlyn worked as a secretary for the First United Methodist Church and as a receptionist for Dr. Roger Gunderson, a local dentist.

She was an active volunteer in her church and taught preschool for 17 years at First United Methodist Day School. In 1983, Marlyn began doing the book-keeping for her son Kern at Kern Carpenter Farms, and continued until two months ago when she became sick. In 1988, along with bookkeeping for the farm, Marlyn began working at Florida City Elementary as a K-4 teacher's assistant for 8 years. She later was transferred to West Homestead Elementary where she worked in the library as a paraprofessional.

Marlyn loved animals, crafts, crossword puzzles and life. She had a great passion for helping people. She was such a loving person and would brighten up a room with her presence. She loved others as Jesus loved us. Marlyn will be truly missed by her surviving family and all of her friends. May she rest in peace in the loving arms of the Savior of us all.

The funeral will be Sunday, April 23, 2023 at The First United Methodist Church of Homestead, 622 N. Krome Avenue. There will be a viewing from 12:30 - 2:00 pm, and the service will begin at 2:00 pm. Following the services she will be laid to rest at Caballero Rivero Palms Woodlawn at 27100 Old Dixie Highway, Naranja, FL beside her husband, the late Dennis Carpenter.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the First United Methodist Church of Homestead, 622 North Krome Avenue, Homestead, FL 33030 or "This is the Dog" animal rescue at 815 N. Homestead Blvd., #336, Homestead, FL 33030.



Play Your Hand

By Bryan Golden

You have to work with what you have. You have to play the hand you have been dealt. You have to make the best of your circumstances. Complaining about your situation is unproductive and a complete waste of time.

Regardless of your circumstances, chances are that you are not maximizing your potential. There is a solution for every problem and every problem contains an opportunity. Spending any time being envious of another's lot is a total waste of energy.

In a card game, it's not necessarily the best hand that wins. The winner is the player who gets the most distance from the hand he or she is dealt. In life, like in a card game, you can't necessarily predict or control what you are dealt.

Throughout your life you will have to deal with thousands of situations. Some you will have control over, others you won't. You were born with strengths and weaknesses. You want to take full advantage of your strengths and overcome or at least minimize your weaknesses.

You can do one of three

things with the cards you are dealt. You can play you hand, getting the maximum mileage from your cards. You can sit and whine and complain about your "bad luck." Or you can fold up and leave the table.

Those who are the most successful are rarely the ones with the best cards. Conversely, those with the best cards are not always the most successful. The most successful people are those who are the most adept at getting the most from each hand.

Why does a person get so dejected when they find they have received a less than perfect hand? No one likes problems. Everyone would like to lead a stress-free life. Problems can be discouraging. It's perfectly normal to be frustrated by unfortunate circumstances.

Life is a series of choices. The challenge is to make the best possible choice. Not all choices you make will be perfect. Just about everyone would do things differently if they had them to do over. Making one or more bad choices doesn't condemn you to a life of misery. If one decision takes you off course you make another one that gets you back on track.

Don't use a bad hand as an excuse to do nothing or as a reason why you can't accomplish something. If you analyze your situation, you will often find that it's not as bad as it first seemed. You will also find opportunities where initially there appeared to be only problems.

Consider it a challenge to find the opportunities in each hand you are dealt. They are there. Perspective is the key. You will always be able to find examples of people who find themselves in a worse situation than you and yet seem to emerge in a positive fashion while turning what looked like a losing hand into a winning one.

With the right outlook, you can derive something positive from most situations. On the other

hand, a bad attitude can make a perfect hand look like a loser. Just as in a card game, many of life's cards are distributed randomly. It's human nature to think that others are getting better cards than you. But when all is averaged out, everyone has challenges and opportunities. The exact mix that someone else has is irrelevant. Your situation and what you make of it is what's important to you.

You can increase your happiness by learning to make the most of what comes your way. Most people don't come close to realizing their potential. If you don't realize the potential you do have, how can you complain about what you don't have?

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